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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the discourse strategies used by native speakers of Turkish in carrying out speech acts of correction and disagreement to status-unequal interlocutors. Focus was on: (1) the politeness markers preferred for softening the impact of words in face-threatening speech situations where the interlocutor corrects the mistake of an addressee of unequal status and shows disagreement with the ideas or suggestions of the other and (2) the relationship between social status, power, and context and language use. Subjects were 80 individuals aged 19-22. Data were collected using a controlled, written elicitation task and analyzed statistically for patterns of positive (PP) and negative politeness (NP) markers, direct and indirect. The elicitation situations included interactions between student and professor and between corporate executive and assistant. Results indicate a preference for NP over PP across situations, although PP strategies were used more in the classroom situation than in the workplace; a questioning strategy was also used frequently in PP. Small marker differences were noted across status levels. (MSE)

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Linguistics of Power and Politeness in Turkish: Revelations from Speech Acts

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Abstract

This study investigates the discourse strategies used by native speakers of Turkish in carrying out the speech acts of correction and disagreement to status unequal interlocutors. Our main concern is to investigate the politeness markers Turks prefer in softening the impact of their words in face-threatening speech situations, where an interlocutor corrects the mistake of an unequal status addressee and where he/she shows disagreement with the idea/suggestion of the other. We are also interested in the relationship between social status, power, and context and language use, hence chose to study the use of politeness across different situations and between status unequal interlocutors. Data was collected via a controlled elicitation task and analyzed in accordance with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness framework, using statistical procedures.

Findings show the norms of appropriateness and the politeness strategies Turks follow in interactions of unequal power relationship, thus revealing part of their sociolinguistic competence, while showing how contextual factors override social status differences in influencing people's use of politeness. Cross-cultural differences in people's orientation to politeness phenomena are also discussed in light of the findings. Such information can assist cross-cultural communication and help applied linguists in designing socioculturally and grammatically authentic and appropriate materials for language teaching.

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Introduction

The issue of politeness as realized across diverse cultures, debates on the universality vs. language specificity of politeness markers, as well as attempts to define this elusive concept have been an object of interest for social scientists working in sociolinguistics, sociology, anthropology, and social psychology. Lying in the heart of effective communication, politeness phenomena can indeed be studied in many areas of social sciences where human interaction is focused upon. Sociolinguistics and pragmalinguistics oriented studies such as this one, have investigated politeness in relation to address terms, honorifics, formulaic utterances, and speech acts. Urging more sociolinguistics research on politeness, Watts et al. (1992:2) argue that 'linguistic politeness is crucially a social phenomenon' and if 'understood properly, it might constitute an important key to the understanding of a number of sociolinguistic problems.'

The study of politeness is intertwined with studies on speech act use, especially with those that are face-threatening (FTAs) by virtue of the message conveyed, as the use of politeness markers form a part of the ritual for making one's utterance less face-threatening for both the speaker and the hearer while fulfilling one's illocutionary intents, and for considering the sociopsychological needs (i.e., *face needs*) of the interlocutors.

Cross-cultural studies on speech acts like apologies, requests, compliments, invitations, etc., (see Olshtain and Cohen 1983, 1987; Olshtain and Weinbach 1986; Wolfson 1989; Blum-Kulka et al. 1989; Takahashi and Beebe 1993; among others) reveal cross-cultural variation in the use of semantic and syntactic formulas as well as politeness markers across speech communities. Such sociolinguistic relativity in turn is likely to lead to intercultural communication problems, or 'pragmatic failure' (Thomas 1983) in learning second/foreign languages. Empirically-founded studies on the execution of speech acts across languages are valuable not only in revealing the sociolinguistic norms of people, but can also be used in combating stereotypes (cf. Takahashi and Beebe 1993), in providing materials for foreign/second language teaching, and in preventing breakdowns in cross-cultural encounters.

Taking politeness to be an integral component of pragmatic awareness which is crucial for effective communication, in this study we are focusing on the potentially FTAs of correction and disagreement as used by native speakers of Turkish to interlocutors of higher and lower status than themselves, because FTAs are more prone to misunderstandings and can lead to more serious pragmatic failures like communication breakdowns. Corrections and disagreements are inherently face-threatening by virtue of the message conveyed such that in the former the knowledge base of the hearer is being challenged, which is threatening for both the hearer whose inadequacy is being highlighted and for the speaker who needs to suppress his/her appearing pompous by catching and correcting the error of the other person. In the case of disagreements the speaker is also disregarding the needs of the hearer to be approved of by opposing the speaker's plan/idea. By carrying out these FTAs speakers are also jeopardizing their own need to be liked and respected by their interlocutors. In both cases, then, the face-needs of both interlocutors are threatened and linguistic measures are taken to remedy this uncomfortable state of matters. Our focus will be on such linguistic markers of politeness used in softening the impact of these speech acts, as these politeness markers are affected by context and relative social status of interlocutors. First, though, a short note for background information.

Politeness in language

Theories on politeness--a central concept in linguistic pragmatics and a crucial part of people's pragmatic competence--attempt to explain how people establish, maintain, or support social relationships, by using socioculturally appropriate communication strategies. Work on politeness include the investigation of its functions in communication, the linguistic markers of politeness, and testing the universality of this concept. A number of theories on politeness have been proposed to explain how people in face-to-face encounters maintain deference for the 'face needs'[1] of one another (Goffman 1967), i.e., their need to project a positive self-image and desire to be approved of by others. As Watts et al. (1992:1) explain 'The study of politeness focuses directly or indirectly on the presentation, maintenance and even adjustment of a concept of the "presentation of self" (cf. Goffman 1959) in the course

of social interaction, on the historical growth of culturally specific patterns of behavior, and on the distribution of status and power in social groups.'

Lakoff (1977) and then Leech (1983) proposed a set of politeness maxims analogous to Grice's maxims of conversation, such as Lakoff's 'Don't impose/ remain aloof' or Leech's tact maxim 'Minimize cost to other. Maximize benefit to the other' (cited in Fasold 1990:159). But, perhaps the most extensive and the best known framework on politeness is the one by Brown and Levinson (1978) discussed in their book *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Brown and Levinson (henceforth B & L) pose strategies for maintaining the face-needs of the interlocutors by explaining how they take heed of people's desire not to be imposed upon and their need to be liked by others, via the use of certain linguistic devices.

The notion of face as conceptualized by Goffman and adapted by B & L is of great importance in the act of conveying information that is seen to be embarrassing for the hearer. It also relates to the dilemma on the part of the speaker as to how best to convey the desired message to the hearer while attending to the hearer's *positive face*, that is to say, showing the hearer that he/she is liked and thought of, by being friendly and cooperative so that the hearer will avoid finding himself/herself in an embarrassing situation. On the other hand, the speaker needs to exercise caution so as not to offend the hearer's *negative face* by avoiding to impose on him/her.

In the B & L model speakers are seen to have three choices in a face-threatening encounter such as when correcting someone's mistake or when disagreeing with another person: i) they can decide to go 'bald on record' by giving explicit corrections or expressing outright disagreement to the hearer, without taking any redressive action to soften the impact of their words. These responses show that the speaker is not concerned with the face needs of the hearer, possibly due to evaluations of relative authority or power of the speaker over the hearer, perceptions of their social distance, and the extent of the imposition of the speaker's words on the hearer; ii) they can choose to go 'on record' by redressing their correction and disagreement formulas by using one or more of politeness markers which are chosen to satisfy requirements of power and social distance as well as the

illocutionary force of the utterance. Here the speaker is taking sociolinguistic measures not to threaten the face of the hearer by minimizing the size of the imposition and showing social closeness; and finally iii) they can go 'off record'--which can be seen as an avoidance and a politeness strategy--by using hints, metaphors, or other devices to sound deliberately ambiguous, thus open to negotiation. Requests to talk further or to reconsider and postponing the decision/answer to a future time are examples of off record strategies.

Strategies of positive and negative politeness (henceforth PP and NP respectively) are used when speakers decide to go on record. Strategies of PP emphasize solidarity and rapport between speaker and listener by noticing or attending to listener's wants and/or interests, and by expressing approval and sympathy with the listener by using various means such as compliments and commiserations, address terms that signify in-group membership, such as *we* or *let's*, and, in general, by being agreeable and conveying friendliness while emphasizing shared attributes with the hearer. Using questions and question tags to seek confirmation or agreement from the hearer, as in 'Don't you think so ?', 'This doesn't seem correct, does it ?' are also examples of PP.

NP strategies, on the other hand, involve displaying respect while minimizing impositions on the hearer. Apologizing as part of 'remedial exchanges' (Goffman 1971), being indirect via using embedded imperatives (Can you pass the salt ?), minimizing the size of imposition by using diminutives, (Can I see you *for a second* ? or There was a *small* mistake there), or mitigating devices (*kind of, sort of*) and using disclaimers (That is good, *but*, followed by claim, criticism, announcement), rather than being direct, we can soften the impact, thus the imposition of our words on the hearer. In general, via NP strategies we aim to avoid imposing on the hearer in a manner indicating that the speaker does not wish to interfere with the hearer's freedom and personal space. (For an extended list of PP and NP strategies as given by B & L (1987), please refer to the Appendix.)

Wolfson (1989) claims that if we consider politeness as a social strategy, as it indeed is in terms of signifying relative social distance and power, then strategies of NP can be said to be used by the less powerful in interacting with a higher status person, as in being offensive and apologizing for it. Strategies of PP, on the other hand, will appear more

offensive and apologizing for it. Strategies of PP, on the other hand, will appear more frequently as a sign of social closeness and approval, as displayed by the use of complements. NP can also be considered as less threatening than PP because the latter is based on the assumption that the hearer agrees with the speaker's assertion of their closeness and this assumption may not necessarily be shared by the hearer. The choice of a particular politeness marker in a given event is dependent upon the perceived weight of the FTA and an evaluation of the social distance between the interlocutors and their relative power. These, claim B & L, have universal applicability.

B & L's model has been criticized for its claims on universality and for the assumption that higher levels of indirectness necessarily indicate greater social distance between interlocutors. Data from Polish (Wierzbicka 1985), from Japanese (Matsumoto 1988) and Chinese (Gu 1990), for example, show that the concept of NP is irrelevant in some cultures, thus defeating claims of universality. Wolfson's (1989) *Bulge Theory*, on the other hand, which is supported by empirical studies on various speech acts as used by native speakers of American English, opposes B & L's and Leech's claim that greater social distance between interlocutors brings about greater indirectness. Wolfson shows that native speakers of American English use more direct speech patterns to intimates, strangers and status unequals, while preferring a more indirect mode of address to status-equal interlocutors who are acquaintances carrying the potential of becoming friends. Wolfson's Bulge Theory would also account for Ervin-Tripp's (1974) finding that hints, as indirect language behavior, are used more often to familiars. Scarcella's (1979) data,on the other hand, shows hints to be used more often to both superiors and subordinates in status, than to status equal familiars. Such conflicting research findings seems to plague empirical studies on the use of politeness markers.

In any event, though we acknowledge that such arguments against the universality of B & L's model need to be taken seriously in making cross-cultural comparisons (for details, see Wierzbicka 1985; Wolfson 1989; Hurley 1992), we feel that this model nevertheless offers the most comprehensive and thorough treatment of the notion of politeness, besides offering a set of explicit strategies for categorizing the linguistics of politeness, as supported

Scarcella (1979) in sociolinguistic research. Takahashi and Beebe applied parts of this model in making cross-cultural comparisons between Americans and Japanese in their language norms, while Cazden used traits of PP and NP for getting insights about classroom discourse. In a similar vein to Beebe and Takahashi, Scarcella compared the politeness strategies employed by both L1 and L2 speakers across situations as mirrors of people's pragmatic competence, suggesting also specific areas of politeness that need to be addressed in the language classroom.

In this study, we will adapt the B & L model to examine the linguistics of politeness in the use of two potentially FTAs of correction and disagreement by native speakers of Turkish to interlocutors of higher and lower status than themselves. Our findings can then be used to test the validity of some of the above-mentioned claims on politeness use across cultures.

Although a sizable body of research on speech act use as well as on other aspects of pragmatics such as politeness exists in many other languages, as mentioned above, such studies on Turkish are limited to the study of the use of expletives by Turkish boys (Dundees et al. 1972), reports on the swearing patterns of Turkish men and women (Duman 1988; Ağaçsaban 1989; Özçalışkan 1994), the study of corrections (Doğançay-Aktuna and Kamışlı, 1996) and studies on the use of formulaic expressions such as proverbs and sayings as mirrors to the norms and values of the Turkish society (Tannen and Öztek 1981; Doğançay 1990). Our aim in this study is to contribute empirically to the body of information on politeness in speech act use from the Turkish perspective by focusing on the following research questions:

1) What is the preferred mode of speech behavior of native speakers of Turkish in disagreeing with and correcting an unequal status interlocutor ? In other words, what kind of consideration do they show for the face-needs of their interlocutors ?

2) What type of politeness markers do Turks utilize to soften the effect of these potential FTAs ?

3) What are the relative impacts of social status and context on Turks' choice of politeness markers ?

The Study

Following the tradition of many speech acts studies, data was collected via discourse completion tests (DCT) (Blum-Kulka 1982) from eighty native speakers of Turkish (28 males and 52 females) aged between 19-22. Subjects were asked to respond to given situations by writing down exactly and without much deliberation what they would say in that particular situation. Such an elicitation technique was preferred over natural observations for being able to collect data in a controlled manner as well as for the sake of cross-cultural comparisons. We have adapted the situations used by Takahashi and Beebe (1993) in their studies with native speakers of American English, Japanese, and Japanese ESL speakers. The situations were translated into Turkish by the researchers and by an independent Turkish-English balanced bilingual. They were further validated by two professors of Turkish and English Linguistics who did a comparative linguistic analysis. The final translations were based on the combination of the above procedures. Although DCTs do not elicit spoken discourse responses which contain variables such as hesitations, pauses, fillers, etc., they are extensively used in speech act studies to collect significant amounts of data in a short period and in a controlled manner (Beebe 1989; Wolfson 1989). As our aim in this study was to reveal the norms of appropriateness of Turkish speakers in situations where social status was controlled for, they served our purposes quite well.

The situations used by Takahashi and Beebe had cross-cultural validity by not being specific to the American culture and consisting of general everyday encounters as ascertained by other Turkish people. Thus, no syntactic or semantic changes were made. As part of the larger research project subjects responded to twelve situations depicting different scenarios, presented in a random order, by writing what exactly they would say in these situations. Four of the scenarios we are going to focus on in this paper were the following:

Situation 1: Correction from Higher to Lower Status

"You are a professor in a history course. During class discussion, one of your students gives an account of a famous historical event with the wrong date."

You: .....

Situation 2: Correction from Lower to Higher Status

"You are a student in a sociology class. During lecture, the professor quotes a famous statement attributing it to the wrong scholar."

You: .....

Situation 3: Disagreement from Higher to Lower Status

"You are a corporate executive. Your assistant submits a proposal for reassignment of secretarial duties in your division. Your assistant describes the benefits of this new plan, but you believe it will not work."

You: .....

Situation 4: Disagreement from Lower to Higher Status

"You work in a corporation. Your boss presents you with a plan for reorganization of the department that you are convinced will not work. Your boss says: "Isn't this a great plan?

You: .....

Along with the discourse completion tests, a one-page questionnaire was also administered to the subjects eliciting background information on their age, gender, family background and socioeconomic status, as well as extent of exposure to foreign languages. The subjects had little or no experience of living in a foreign culture as extended exposure to other cultures was considered to be a potential factor influencing people's language use. They represented people from urban and rural backgrounds and from various socioeconomic groups. Thus, the subjects formed a group quite representative of young educated Turkish people who can be found in all areas of Turkey.

Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively in three tiers. First, subjects' responses in the four situations were categorized in accordance with the general outline of the B & L model as direct ('bald on record') or indirect either as 'on record with redressive politeness markers', or 'off record' where an answer containing disagreement or correction was avoided by being ambiguous and giving a response open to negotiation. Summary of the first categorization, as an answer to the first study question, is given on Table 1 and discussed below.

A second analysis was done on the markers of PP and NP used by the subjects when they softened their words to a status unequal, to answer the second study question. Here subjects' utterances in instances when they went 'on record' and redressed their words with politeness strategies were analyzed and findings are presented on Table 2.

A further comparison of subjects' sociolinguistic behavior in different statuses and different contexts was carried out to see differences and similarities in the norms of behavior as influenced by the above social variables and to answer study question 3.

Categorization of subjects' responses in the B & L model was done independently by the two researchers, and an inter-coder reliability of 0.86 was obtained. A few cases where discrepancies occurred were discussed and resolved. Throughout the three levels of analysis statistical computations were carried out to investigate whether sociolinguistic variation acros status levels and speech acts (contexts) was significant. The test for measuring differences between two independent population proportions was used for this purpose. Results are indicated by the Z values on the tables below where a Z value of 1.645 and above indicates statistically significant difference at the .05 level.

Politeness continuum: Directness through indirectness

Before discussing our findings, it is important to note that all our Turkish data was found to be easily categorisable into B & L's framework thus showing the cross-linguistic applicability of the latter. Table 1 summarizes the general mode of behavior of Turkish subjects in responding to the mistake and in disagreeing with the suggestion of someone of unequal status.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

In general Turkish people showed a significant preference for using politeness markers in their corrections and disagreements of an unequal status interlocutor, with the exception of professors correcting their students (whose bald on record vs. on record variation was not

significant (see endnote 2)). In the role of the higher status interlocutor Turkish subjects were more straightforward, with professors being the most direct (44%). In the classroom situation, higher status professors either gave an immediate correction of the student's mistake or simply pointed out the mistake with no immediate correction, usually stating the correct date.

(1) '*Söylediğin tarih yanlış. Doğrusu* ...' (The date you gave is wrong. The correct date is ...)

(2) '*Doğru tarih şudur* ...' (The correct date is ...)

(3) '*1948 değil, 1949.*' (It's not 1948, but 1949.)

In expressing direct disagreement with the suggestion of the lower status person, higher status bosses gave a criticism of the plan, sometimes followed by a rationale or a suggestion for modifications or reconsideration.

(4) '*Bu öneri şu nedenlerden dolayı işe yaramaz. O yüzden kullanamayız.*' (This suggestion is not good because of ..... Thus we cannot use it.)

(5) '*Bu planda birçok eksiklikler var.*' (There are many deficiencies in this plan.)

(6) '*Söylediğiniz planın birçok eksik yanı var, mesela ... ya da ....., yani bu plan bu durumda yürümez.*' (The plan you mention has deficiencies, for example, ... or ....., therefore it won't work in this form.)

There was a difference across situations, however, in the level of directness displayed by the higher status interlocutor: In giving corrections in the classroom, higher status professors were significantly more direct than higher status bosses disagreeing with their assistants (44% vs. 28%, $Z=2.47$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, there was no significant difference between the bald on record and on record categories in corrections by professors, though the difference was highly significant for all the other three groups.[2] This shows that professors did not feel a particular need for redressive action, unlike the others in the study. This finding can be explained as a result of expectations and norms of behavior seen appropriate in the two situations. In classroom contexts, teachers are expected to give corrections as part of their jobs, thus professors do not feel the need to be polite and indirect, whereas in the workplace, considerations of the face-needs of the others are more expected.

In terms of B & L's framework, this finding indicates that the weightiness of the FTA, thus the perception for politeness, is affected by the particular context people are in and is related to the general goals of the interaction. The idea that the more power an interlocutor had, the less was his/her perception for the need to redress his/her utterance thus applied for the correction situation, though not in the disagreement situation, as more bosses in the workplace preferred to redress their utterances.

Lower status interlocutors acted quite uniformly in the two situations. They were significantly more polite ($p<.001$), showing deference for the face of the higher status person. In both situations the majority of the lower status speakers utilized one or more politeness markers (to be detailed below) to soften the impact of their corrections and disagreement to the higher status addressee (65 % in disagreement, 63% in corrections). This finding indicates that indeed less powerful people perceive a greater need for politeness.

The off-record strategy of being ambiguous by giving responses open to negotiation was not preferred much by the Turkish subjects. Only in the role of bosses expressing disagreement with the suggestions of the lower status assistant were these used (15%). When bosses preferred to go off record, they said things like the following, which expressed neither agreement nor disagreement with the speaker's suggestion, thus were ambiguous:

(7) '*Bu konuda görüşlerine önem verdiğim ...'in fikrini de soralım.*' (Let's ask for ...'s idea on this, whose opinions I give importance)

(8) '*İşlerimin yoğun olmadığı bir zamanda üzerine düşünüp, fikrimi ondan sonra belirteceğim.*' (I will think about it a time when I am not so busy and let you know my opinion.)

(9) '*Sanırım bunun üzerinde biraz daha düşünsen iyi olur.*' (I think it would be better if you thought about it a bit more.)

(10) '*Şu anda bir karar almak doğru olmaz.*' (It wouldn't be right to take a decision now.)

In short, by suggesting reconsideration of the plan, postponing their evaluation of it, etc. higher status interlocutors avoided giving their opinions at that time. This can be seen as an avoidance strategy and as part of politeness. Note also that in the role of the professor only one subject went off record by saying *Bu önemli olayların tarihlerini iyi*

öğrenmeni tavsiye ederim. (I suggest that you learn such important dates well) which could be perceived as reinforcement of a correct answer or as pointing out a mistake in the date. This indicates that being ambiguous is not perceived as an appropriate feedback strategy by professors in the classroom whose tasks are to be as clear as possible for pedagogical purposes.

'No response' category as an option not to say anything seemed an option open to students in the classroom, though it was not used much. This could be a factor of the situation and the number of interlocutors involved in the interaction. In a classroom situation, students have the option of remaining silent unless they are nominated by the teacher. Yet in a one-to-one, face-to-face encounter speakers do not have this option when asked a questions as exemplified by the disagreement situations above. When their opinions are openly sought speakers can only go off record if they feel that their words will be too threatening for the hearer. Nonetheless, neither the 'no response' nor the 'off record' categories seems preferable to the Turks.

In short, if we view the bald on record-on record-off record categories as forming a continuum ranging from the most direct to the most indirect, we can say that in both correction and disagreement situations Turks prefer to take the middle ground irrespective of status. The only exception was the bald classroom corrections by the higher status professor which could be explained by virtue of the speaker's pedagogical role as aforementioned.

Politeness strategies across status levels and speech situations

In this part of the analysis we will discuss in detail the linguistic markers of PP and NP used by the Turkish subjects when they went 'on record with redressive action' in the two potentially face-threatening speech contexts. (See Appendix for a list and definition of PP and NP strategies). Our analysis involved categorizing the syntactic structures used to soften the impact of speakers words, thus were more linguistic in nature.

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

A comparison of the cumulative percentages of PP and NP used by the subjects shows that in the two speech act situations, while addressing status superiors as well as status subordinates, Turkish subjects used NP markers more, thus aiming to avoid imposing on the hearer while showing respect (e.g., 23% vs. 77% in disagreement for both status levels). In other words, regardless of their status and the situation (speech act) Turkish people preferred strategies of NP to strategies of PP, hence showing more concern for conveying respect to the hearer than displaying solidarity. This preference of the Turks for NP markers regardless of status does not concur with Wolfson's (1989) claim that strategies of NP are preferred by the less powerful, thus questioning the cross-cultural applicability of such an assertion.

Further statistical analysis indicated that Turks' preference for NP over PP was significant across groups, except for the case of higher status professors who seemed almost equally concerned with establishing solidarity in the classroom as well as avoiding impositions, contrary to the other three groups.[3] This differential sociolinguistic behavior of professors could be related to their desire to give affective feedback to the learners that would motivate them, hence triggering better attitudes to learning. Similarly, professor-student relationships are perceived to be more similar to that of parent-child, thus displaying more the characteristics of care-giver, affective speech, contrary to interactions in the workplace. Hence, professors were more concerned than bosses in emphasizing rapport between themselves and their students. This language behavior was reciprocal in that students responded to markers of PP with similar features, again emphasizing solidarity with the teacher.

In general, PP strategies were deemed significantly more appropriate in the classroom correction situation than they were in the disagreement situation at the workplace, as indicated in Table 2 and by the comparison of the cumulative uses of NP and PP strategies. For instance, subjects in both the higher and lower status roles in the classroom used about twice as many PP markers than they did in expressing disagreement at the workplace (42 % vs. 23% in the Higher to Lower category, $Z=2.07$, $p<.05$). A possible

explanation for this could be attempts by both students and the professor to create an atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching; an attempt to build solidarity between the two parties in the classroom. Therefore, so far as the use of politeness markers were concerned, the situation and the language function influenced language behavior.

In terms of the specific PP features used, it was found that including the speaker in the decision by using *let's* or *we* (strategy 3) was preferred by the bosses. For instance, in disagreeing with their assistant, they said things like;

(11) '*Yalnız bu planın şu dezavantajları var. Şöyle yapsak daha iyi olmaz mı ?*

(But this plan had these disadvantages. Wouldn't it be better if we do it this way ?)

(12) '*Bazı eksikliklerin farkına varmanız çok güzel, ama bence yine de bu düzenlemeyi başka açıdan ele almalıyız.*' (It's good that you found some deficiencies but I think we need to consider this rearrangement from a different perspective.)

Such an inclusive strategy was not used much in the classroom where direct corrections were given. This could be explained by considering the role relationships and the relative ages of the interlocutors such that 'let's' or 'we' might be more readily used to those we are on more equaivalent levels. Instead, professors used devices whereby they attended to the hearer's face wants by giving reassurance to the students via expressing their belief in the student's knowledge;

(13) '*O tarih değil ama bir kere daha düşünürsen eminim bulabilirsin.*' (It's not that date but if you think again, I am sure that you can find it.)

(14) '*Hadi, tarihi biliyorsun.*' (Come on, you know that date.)

The PP strategy of using question forms instead of statements in offering corrections and disagreement to status unequals (strategy 6) was used by the subjects as a means of neutralizing assertions by seeking agreement, as they soften the degree of threat implicit in the message conveyed. Higher status bosses and professors used the following in conveying their disagreements and corrections:

(15) '*Bu olay 1922 tarihinde değil, 1923 tarihinde olmuştu, değil mi ... ?* (This event happened in 1923, not in 1922, didn't it ... ?)

(16) '*Söylediklerini anlıyorum, ama benim görüşümde öyle yapacağımız yerde böyle yapsak daha iyi olmaz mı ?* (I understand what you are saying, but in my opinion, would't it be better if we did it this way instead ?)

Assistants in the workplace also made use of the negative yes/no questioning strategy as shown below;

(17) '*Evet yalnız bazı bölümlerde şu değişiklikleri yapamazmıyız ?* (Yes, but couldn't we make these changes in some parts ?)

(18) '*Efendim, plan iyi fakat şöyle olsaydı daha iyi olmazmıydı ?* (Sir, the plan is good but would't it be better if it were like this ?)

One significant finding of the study was that this questioning strategy was the only PP strategy used by the students to the professor in the classroom and their preferred politeness marker in general (41%, $Z=4.49$, $p<.001$), probably as a result of the situation and role relationships. Students used utterances like the ones below much more often than professors and other groups in the study ($p<.001$). A possible explanation for the choice of this strategy over other PP strategies could also be that students were less sure of their knowledge on the subject matter, thus hesitant in their corrections.

(19) '*Bu söz başka bir şahsa ait değil miydi ?*' (Weren't these words someone else's ?)

(20) '*Bu söz Durkheim'a mı yokse Weber'e mi aitti hocam ?* (Did these words belong to Durkheim or Weber, sir ?)

(21) '*Hocam, acaba bu söylediğiniz lafı ...dememiş miydi, yoksa ben mi yanılıyorum ?*

(Sir, wasn't it ... who said those, or am I mistaken ?)

Students' preference of using negative yes/no questions can be a result of their functions as politer forms of corrective feedback. As Celce-Murcia and Lersen-Freeman (1983) explain in their *Grammar Book*, negative yes/no questions are used for seeking agreement without imposition on the hearer as well as carrying the function of expressing surprise for receiving information that goes counter to one's expectations. Based on this, it can be said that by using such syntactic constructions as a response strategy, lower status interlocutors are not only avoiding imposition on the face needs of the higher status person (NP strategy) but also expressing their surprise for not getting the correct information from

the higher status person as they expected. By using such a strategy they indicate their belief in the professor's ability to give correct information in general, hence catering to the needs of the higher status person's positive face.

Thus, in general, students used a more redressed, more softened language than the professors, possibly as a result of their lower status. In the classrooms it is the professor's responsibility to give corrective feedback, thus as the above examples show, professors do not seem to feel the need to soften the impact of their words or show concern for the face-needs of the students. Students, on the other hand, are less direct and nonimposing in their offer of corrective feedback due to their roles as learners and not as disseminators of information in the classroom. The finding that students overwhelmingly offer a correction rather than pointing it out to the professor and expecting him/her to self correct shows that the latter is not seen as appropriate behavior. An explanation for that could be that just pointing out an error and expecting self-correction from the higher status person might be perceived as a challenge or as testing the knowledge of the professor which is not deemed appropriate student behavior in the Turkish classrooms. Students can thus offer correction in a non-threatening manner, but cannot ask the professor to rethink the date, which could be seen as a challenge of the higher status person's professional knowledge. Professors, on the other hand, are supposed to evaluate student's knowledge, thus can ask questions in a more straightforward manner.

As aforementioned, strategies of NP were used more often by the Turks in these two situations regardless of the status of the hearer, except for the case of professors (see endnote 3) as discussed above. The most widely used NP strategies were minimizing the size of the imposition on the hearer by using diminutives, using disclaimers preceded by apologies or positive remarks, and using parenthetical verbs/adverbs as softening devices. We will turn to these politeness markers now.

Diminutives were used by Turks as shown below (strategy 3).

(22) '*Bence bu konuyu biraz daha düşünmelisin. Bazı noktaları biraz daha düşünmelisin.*' (I think you need to think about some points a bit more.)

(23) '*Plan ve düşüncelerin ..... sekreterlik görevleri için pek uygun değil.*' (Your plans and thought are not that useful for secretarial duties.)

(24) '*Sanırım tarihte küçük bir hata var.*' (I think there is a small mistake with the date.)

In general, the most frequently used linguistic marker of mitigation in Turkish is the adverb *pek* or the adverb *o kadar*, followed by a descriptive adjective and negative verb, as in '*pek uygun değil*', '*pek güzel değil*' or '*o kadar iyi değil*', '*o kadar uygun değil*' (i.e. not that suitable/nice). The status difference had an influence on the use of diminutives. In the two situations there was no difference among the higher status interlocutors' use of diminutives, yet among the lower status interlocutors they were not used at all by students ($p<.01$), possibly as a result of feeling that they needed to be more precise and clearer in the classroom.

Other strategies of NP were the use of disclaimers preceded by positive remarks or apologies (strategy 4), which were preferred by bosses than by professor (39% vs. 19%, $p<.05$) and also used more in the workplace than in the classroom.

(25) '*Evet olayın gelişimi anlattığınız gibi, yalnız, ... tarihinde olmuştur.*'

(Yes, the development of the event is as you say, except, it happened on .....)

(26) '*Haklı olabilirsiniz ama tecrübelerime göre bu planın pek uygun olamıyacağını düşünüyorum.*' (You might be right but based on my experiences I think this plan will not be really useful.)

Disclaimer preceded by apologies were generally used by the lower status interlocutors in the role of students offering corrections to the professor;

(27) '*Hocam, pardon, ama hatırladığım kadarıyla, bu söz ...'ye aittir.*' (Excuse me sir, but as far as I remember, these words are ....)

(28) '*Afedersiniz hocam, bize verdiğiniz bilgiler ışığında sanırım bu söz ... 'in değildi.*' (Excuse me sir, in light of the infomation you gave us, I think these are not ..'s words.)

In general the formula of positive remark/apology for interrupting + but + correction/criticism of the plan was a widely used strategy, preferred more by the interactants in the workplace than by those in the classroom. This strategy which is widely used in

The last NP category used frequently was the integration of parenthetical verbs or adverbs as mitigating devices for softening the tone of corrections and disagreements (strategy 5). This strategy was preferred more in the classroom situation than in the workplace, especially by the students. Both professors' and students' corrections of one another included a softener as shown in the examples below;

(29) '*Sanırım şimdilik bu düzenle devam etmek daha uygun olur.*' (I think it would be better for us to continue with the current setup.)

(30) '*Seninle aynı fikirde olduğumu söyleyemeyeceğim.*' (I cannot say that I agree with you.)

(31) '*Ufak bir tarih sapması oldu herhalde. Asıl tarih budur ...*' (There is probably a small mistake in the date. The real date is ...)

Other mitigating devices softening the tone of corrections and disagreements were *bana kalırsa/bence* (in my view), *sanırım* (I suppose/guess), *herhalde* (maybe/ possibly). Hedges such as 'kind of', 'sort of' (strategy 8) which are used quite frequently in English to minimize the impact of words, was used only in a few instances by the Turks. Some examples are;

(32) '*Bu plan galiba bazı yönlerden eksik gibi.*' (This plan seems sort of lacking in some aspects.)

(33) '*Evet haklısın, teori olarak çok güzel bir fikir. Ancak pratikte uygulanması biraz zor gibi.*' (Yes you are right. In theory this is a very good idea. But in pactice it is sort of difficult to implement.)

In sum, Turkish subjects used at least one of the above discussed strategies of NP and PP in their attempts to minimize threat to the interlocutors face and to maximize solidarity. In general NP strategies seemed more preferable in the workplace, while PP strategies were seen better suited for the classroom and regardless of the status of interlocutors. The latter finding provides counter examples to the generalization that lower status interlocutors are more NP oriented (cf. Wolfson 1989), thus necessitating caution in making generalizations across cultures without empirical research.

Relative impact of social status and speech situation (context) on politeness markers

In the last part of our analysis we compared the relative impacts of social status and context, the latter referring to the particular speech act, on the choice of politeness markers, to answer study question 3. Specifically we analyzed the politeness markers used by higher and lower status interlocutors in the correction and disagreement situations, using data from Table 2, in order to see whether people differed more across status levels or speech acts.

An examination of Turks' cumulative use of markers of PP and NP shows that irrespective of their social positions in a given situation, people display similar tendencies of using PP and NP to an interlocutor of unequal status. Greater differences appear in the use of PP and NP markers across speech acts than across status levels. For example, regardless of their status, people use 23% of PP and 77% NP in disagreeing ($p<.001$) (see Table 2 and endnote 3). In corrections, the use of PP is about 41% and NP about 58 % by both the higher and lower status interlocutors. Therefore, people seem to act in accordance with the demands of the situation, rather than in line with their status levels. This, in turn, points at the greater impact of speech act/context on language use, than the relative status of interlocutors.

An internal analysis of the specific PP and NP strategies display certain, albeit small, differences across status levels, nonetheless. For example, in the correction situation, the only strategy used by the lower status students is the questioning strategy (41%), while higher status professors show more variation, as discussed before. In the NP category, the only statistically significant difference is the greater use of mitigating devices by the higher status bosses over the lower status assistant (23% vs. 13%, $Z=1.74$, $p<.05$). Apart from these, subjects displayed quite unoform politeness use across status levels.

When we compare people's behavior across the disagreement and correction situations, we see greater differences. For instance, in the classroom, markers of PP are seen more often than in the workplace (42% vs. 23%, $Z=2.07$, $p<.05$) The use of NP also differs across situations, 77% vs. 58% in disagreements and corrections respectively ($Z=2.07$, $p<.05$). So far as the specific NP and PP markers are concerned, apart from the

students' preference for questions, we see that in the disagreement situation people of higher and lower status prefer to use disclaimers (39% and 45% respectively) while in corrections people prefer more the use of mitigating devices (H:31% and L: 32%), again showing difference across contexts, but no significant difference across status levels.

All in all then, a comparison of Turks' behavior across status levels and speech acts (contexts) shows that irrespective of their status in a given situation, people seem to use quite similar politeness markers, with few exceptions. It is thus not so much the status difference but the context that triggers different sociolinguistic behavior from people, at least in these particular contexts.

Though Turks seem to use strategies of NP more often in both speech acts, markers of PP are deemed more suitable for the classroom than they are for the workplace. As mentioned above, this could be related to role relationships and the greater need of teachers and students for building solidarity and an affective environment in order to fulfill their overriding pedagogical aims. Yet, professors are also expected to be straightforward in their corrections of the learners while this is not expected behavior from bosses. In the workplace, deference and avoidance of imposition on the other person overrides the need to build solidarity. Hence, the characteristics of the social context affect our sociolinguistic behavior and how we try to make our utterances more polite for satisfying the face needs of our interlocutors. This finding points to the need for examining the particular nuances of a speech situation/speech event to find out exactly what factors trigger the use of what type of politeness markers. This is by no means an easy undertaking as 'politeness involves more that just pragmatic well-formedness, whatever that might be. In studying politeness, we are automatically studying social interaction and the appropriacy of certain modes of behavior in accordance with socio-cultural conventions' (Watts et al. 1992:6). These factors necessitate a more encompassing approach to the linguistic study of politeness in order to reveal the sociopragmatic conventions underlying it.

Conclusions and Implications

In this study we have shown the norms of behavior of native speakers of Turkish in expressing disagreement to and correcting status unequals. Our data showed the influence of status differences and role relationships as well as the effects of the context on language use, indicating the greater impact of the latter on the use of politeness. In the two situations compared, it was found that professors display different sociolinguistic behavior to other people also in a higher status role, possibly as a result of the particular pedagogic roles they assume as aforementioned. We have also pointed out certain linguistic markers of PP and NP found appropriate by the Turks in the given situations.

Our findings point to different directions than the claims of Wolfson (1989) and Scarcella (1979). Wolfson maintains that strategies of NP are expected to be used by the less powerful in interactions of unequal power. Claiming that strategies of NP are 'central to deferential behavior when addressing those higher in rank and characteristics of social distancing behavior in general', Scarcella (1979, p. 281) also found native speakers of English to use more NP to superiors than to status equals or subordinates. Yet, our analysis of politeness strategies used by native speakers of Turkish showed that in the disagreement and correction situations, strategies of NP are favored considerably more by both the higher and the lower status Turks. Notwithstanding, the PP strategy of questioning the statement of the higher status interlocutor (i.e., professor) as a redressed correction strategy was the favored mode of behavior for lower status students, though not used much by the lower status assistants. Such findings lead us to exercise caution in making generalizations from work done with native speakers of English to speakers of other languages before doing empirical cross-cultural research. We thus would like to call for a movement away from Anglo-Saxon, especially English language orientation, in politeness research to a truly cross-cultural one to clarify conflicts in existing data.

In a theoretical discussion Bantahila and Davies (1989) make the claim that Moroccans are oriented towards NP whereas the British are oriented toward PP, though the authors do not provide us with empirical data or examples for comparison. It might seem from our findings that Turks are also oriented toward NP. Yet, again we would like to

exercise caution in making such a generalization without studying Turks across a greater range of contexts and interlocutors than those investigated here before making claims about socio-cultural tendencies for choosing NP or PP. As shown by our findings and other cross-cultural research in pragmatics, many factors such as relative power due to social status, contextual factors such as the speech situation and speech acts executed, as well as factors like age, gender, socioeconomic status, geographical location, etc., interrelate to determine people's norms of effective and appropriate communication. These in turn require more analysis in relation to the linguistic execution of politeness that functions to establish a delicate balance in creating and maintaining social relationships.

In studying politeness phenomena it is important to bear in mind that perceptions of politeness as well as its linguistic realization show variation across cultures. Blum-Kulka's (1992) study shows how metapragmatic conceptions of what constitutes politeness in the Israeli society differ from those governing English-speaking communities. She says that there are some settings in which certain types of behavior will be seen as polite while there are other settings in which politeness is viewed negatively. Blum-Kulka adds that the Israeli society is PP-oriented by being motivated toward minimizing social distance and degrees of imposition, and that affect as a social factor carries equal importance as social distance, power and imposition in accounting for politeness in that culture.

In a similar vein, Ide (1987) shows that the expressions of linguistic politeness is much more situationally conventionalized in the Japanese society than it is in the English-speaking world. In many situations the Japanese will opt for culturally determined situationally appropriate formulas whereas many Westerners will need to make strategic decisions in various contexts. Ide's assertion is also supported by Hill et al.'s (1986) study showing the Japanese society to be discernment-oriented, such that speakers submit to the requirements of the system and choose one of the readily available politeness formulas, while Americans have a greater choice of creativity across situations. In the Turkish case, although the context was found to have a strong influence on people's choice of politeness markers, there were no formulaic expressions used contrary to the case of the Japanese.

In studying the politeness markers in directives among Turkish immigrant family members in Holland, Huls (1988) shows that the direct bold-on-record strategy was the preferred norm of Turks while hints were also used frequently. Our findings showed that although bald-on record was also used between status unequals in the workplace and in the classrooms, its was not the preferred mode of behavior and that hints were not used much. These point at intracultural variation across situations and participants, thus making generalizations on politeness rather superficial.

In interpreting our findings and especially in generalizing them to other contexts in Turkish life we need to consider the following: This study looked at two FTAs between status unequals, and results apply only to those situations where the social distance is great and the interlocutors' powers are unequal. In order to get a true understanding of politeness and test B & L' claims of universality, such findings need to be analyzed in comparison to the linguistic behavior of Turks across the same situations but with status equal and status unequal friends, acquaintances and intimates like family members (cf. Huls 1988). Only then can we get a real picture of politeness in the Turkish culture, decide on the relative weights of power, social distance and weightiness of the illocutionary force of speaker's utterance, and determine whether Turks are discernment or volition-oriented (cf. Hill et al. 1986).

Secondly, our data focuses on written language that differs from spoken face-to-face interactions which can bring about variation in people's use of politeness. Non-verbal communication cues need also be considered as eye movements, gestures, postures, even prosodic factors like pitch can play a role in expressing politeness. Yet, despite its limitations, the present study shows that there are cross-cultural and cross-linguistic differences in language use and certain pre-determined factors might not have the same impact in different contexts.

Finally, despite the significant body of research that now exists on the linguistic aspects of politeness, we need to address this issue from a more sociolinguistic and cross-cultural perspective by studying not only different cultures' expression of politeness but their perceptions of it as well. Although it appears that B & L's framework of politeness applies

across many languages and many speech situations, there is also accumulating evidence challenging its claims of universality. Thus, there appears to be an acute need for the study of politeness in different sociocultural contexts and this needs to be an emic and microethnographic perspective in order to provide us with insights about different cultures' perceptions of politeness and its linguistic and nonverbal expressions in communication. Findings from sociolinguistic research like the one attempted here can aid applied linguists and cross-cultural communication in general. Such linguistic markers and formulas of politeness can be taught to language learners in an attempt to make their talk more polite, less face-threatening, and, therefore, more communicatively effective. We hope that the study we attempted here provide some clues on politeness and factors governing its use across cultures and, more importantly, trigger more empirical research across languages and cultures.

Notes:

1. Goffman's (1967) notion of face-work is also referred to as "relational work", "image work" as well as "politic behavior" in German linguistics (see Held)

2. Bald on record vs. On record categories:

   Correction, Higher to Lower: 44% vs. 38%, Z=0.84, n.s.

   Correction, Lower to Higher: 11% vs. 63%, Z=8.82, p<.001

   Disagreement, Higher to Lower: 28% vs. 51%, Z=3.14, p<.01

   Disagreement, Lower to Higher: 19% vs. 65%, Z=6.11, p<.001

3. PP vs. NP use by subjects across situations:

   Correction, Higher to Lower: 42% vs. 58%, Z=1.41, n.s.

   Correction, Lower to Higher: 41% vs. 59%, Z=2.06, p<.05

   Disagreement, Higher to Lower: 23% vs. 77%, Z=6.70, p<.001

   Disagreement, Lower to Higher: 23% vs. 77%, Z=6.87, p<.001

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Appendix: Strategies used in expressing positive and negative politeness. (adapted from Brown, P. and Levinson, S. (1987).

Positive Politeness: emphasize solidarity and rapport between speaker and listener.

1. noticing or attending to listener's wants, interests, needs via strategies such as using first names, giving compliments, asking about the other's well being, asking if help is needed, greetings, etc.

2. expressing approval and sympathy with the listener

3. including the listener by using 'we' and 'let's'

4. making small talk and using openings and closings

5. being agreeable by using back channel behavior and/or repetition of the listener's utterances.

6. seeking agreement by using question tags, etc., as a way of neutralizing assertions about intentions, motivation, and responsibility.

Negative politeness: minimize imposition on the listener, show deference.

1. being indirect via using embedded imperatives as in 'Can you pass the salt ?'

2. being pessimistic and saying things like 'I don't suppose you can lend me some money.'

3. minimizing the size of imposition by using diminutives, as in 'Can I see you for a second' or 'There was a small mistake there.'

4. apologizing and using disclaimers

'Please forgive /excuse me for calling so late.'

'That is good, but, ... (+ claim, criticism, announcement)

'If I am not mistaken ... (+ claim, criticism, announcement)

'If you don't mind .... (+ directive)

5. using parenthetical verbs/adverbs as softening, mitigating devices

'This is the right answer, I guess.'

'We can, I think, reconsider this proposal.'

'presumably', 'possibly', 'unfortunately'

6. using distance markers as in using 'we' as in contrast to 'you'

7. reducing the immediacy of the imposition by using the agentless passive voice or appealing to authority

'Your application has been rejected.'

'All students are required by the school regulations to take compulsory history lessons.'

8. using hedges as 'kind of', 'sort of', etc., to minimize the impact of words

9. being speculative as in 'I wonder if ..... (+ directive)

Tables To The Text

Table 1: Subjects' preferred mode of behavior in the two speech act situations in relation to the status of interlocutor. (n= 80 for each situation)

	Higher to Lower					**Lower to Higher**				
	Disagreement		Correction			Disagreement		Correction		
Mode of Behavior	n	%	n	%	Z	n	%	n	%	Z
Bald On Record	22	28	35	44	**2.47	15	19	9	11	1.08
On Record	41	51	30	38	1.50	52	65	50	63	0.58
Off Record	12	15	1	1	**3.00	5	6	4	5	0.19
Disqualified[1].	5	6	9	11	-	6	8	13	16	-
Other[2].		-	5	6	-	1	1	1	1	-
Accept[3].		-		-	-	1	1		-	-
No response		-		-			-	3	4	-

Notes. All percentages are rounded off the nearest tenth.

**p<.01

1. Disqualified are those responses in which instead of writing what they would say in those situations, subjects described what they would do.

2. Other category contains responses which could not be categorized in the given framework.

3. 'Accept' category contains the one response where the lower status person accepted the boss's plan despite disagreeing with it.

Table 2: Frequency of preferred politeness strategies by subjects who went on record. (S is the number of subjects who used politeness formulas; those who went 'on record')

	Higher to Lower					**Lower to Higher**				
	Disagreement		Correction			Disagreement		Correction		
	S=41		S=30			S=52		S=50		
Positive Politeness[1]	n	%	n	%	Z	n	%	n	%	Z
Str. 1	1	1	7	19	**3.45	--		--		--
Str. 3	9	12	2	6	1.06	11	13	--		**3.14
Str. 6	7	9	6	17	1.12	8	10	28	41	***4.49
Cumulative	**17**	**23**	**15**	**42**	*2.07	**19**	**23**	**28**	**41**	**2.37
Negative Politeness										
Str. 1	--		--		--	1	1	--		0.91
Str. 3	10	13	3	8	0.76	11	13	--		**3.14
Str. 4	29	39	7	19	*2.03	37	45	18	27	**2.36
Str. 5	17	23	11	31	0.90	10	13	22	32	**3.00
Str. 8	2	3	--		0.99	4	5	--		*1.85
Cumulative	**58**	**77**	**21**	**58**	*2.07	**63**	**77**	**40**	**59**	**2.37

All percentages are rounded off to the nearest tenth.

* p< .05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

1. For description of strategies of positive and negative politeness, refer to the Appendix.